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"We have forgotten how to be good guests,
how to walk lightly on the earth as its other creatures do".
– Barbara Ward

Theme

The world we live in today is the outcome of past anthropogenic actions. The Species of Homo Sapiens has been so dominant among all the species that survive and thrive over the planet earth that we commonly attribute this age as the 'Anthropocene Epoch'. Anatomically modern humans arose in Africa about 3,00,000 years ago and have achieved behavioral modernity about 50,000 years ago and yet it is the actions of human beings from the past 5000 years that have had the most impact on the planet Earth. The interaction between Humans and the Natural Earth which includes all its Biotic and Abiotic components have formed the pathway over which we have journeyed from the earliest discoveries of fire and invention of stone tools to the modern age of science and technological marvel.

The successes and the problems that humanity faces today are the consequences of political, economic and social activities of the past societies. Climate Change and Global Warming have been categorized as the severest humanitarian challenges of the 21st Century. Issues of Deforestations, Soil Erosion, Pollution, Ground Water Depletion, Watershed reduction are all intertwined issues and are a direct result of rampant resource exploitation, lack of sensitive policy making and unholy triumph of unrestricted commercial interest over sustainable economic progress. We also need to understand that this story of rampant Human exploitation of natural resources is more or less universal and hence the history of any region or nation can be studied through the lens of Human-Nature interactions.

It is with the above perspective that this study aims to understand and bring out the various facts regarding the forests of Western India in the late 19th and first half of 20th Century. It aims to understand the changes in the forestry with focus on policy issues and commercial exploitation of Forests in the above said region and time period.

The forests of Western Ghats form the northern end of the 'Western Ghats of India and Island of Sri Lanka' which is among the 13 Biodiversity Hotspots of the World. The Western Ghats cover an

area of 1,60,000 sq.km and is also a UNESCO World Heritage sites and are older than the Himalayas. It has over 7402 species of flowering plants, 1814 species of non-flowering plants, 139 mammal species, 508 bird species, 179 amphibian species, 6000 insects and 290 freshwater fish species. Among them are 329 globally threatened species. The range starts near the Songadh town of Gujarat, south of Tapti river and runs southwards in the state of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

The East India Company Government began the colonial administration of most areas of western India from 1819. From 1819 to 1858 it was governed under the company rule after which the British Crown took over the administration of the Indian Subcontinent. The forest regions of Western Ghats which fell in the western region of India were administered under Bombay presidency. Even after the Independence in 1947 there was some form of administrative continuity until the bifurcation of the Bombay province into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat in 1960.

The Government Forests Act of 1865 was the first attempt to initiate a forest policy under the colonial rule. However, it was widely criticized and replaced by the Indian Forests Act of 1878. It was this act that gave the policy framework for Forest governance. Hence, the study has been initiated from the year 1878. The study will look in depth at the impact of this Act and subsequent colonial policies which not only continued but expanded the extraction and use of forest resources, especially timber. The study will explore the time period comprehensively with detailed analysis of the colonial forest policies and the impact it had on the forests of India. It will try to indulge in major issue like policy studies, Commercial exploitation of forest resources, Impact of global events on forestry and also the afforestation efforts in the form of silviculture and plantations.

During the colonial rule, the Britishers implemented various policies and Acts to manage, conserve and exploit the forests of India. The Colonial Policies created the legal and administrative background for commercial exploitation of the forestry. The Government Forests Act of 1865 empowered the British government to declare any land covered with trees as a government forest and make rules to manage it. The Indian Forest Act, 1878 led to the categorization of forests types. In the 20th Century the 'Indian Forest Act, 1927' clarified the rights and duties of forest officials expanding the Government control over Indian. Forests while, the 'Government of India Act 1935' became a significant milestone in Indian administration by undertaking a division of subjects into

Federal and Provincial subjects. All the above Acts and Resolutions will be studied in the research.

These policies enabled the use of Timber from Western Ghats for lying of Railway sleepers whch began with the very first railway line that ran from Bori Bundar in Bombay to Thane on 16th April 1853. Expansion of Railways led to exponential increase in demand of timber, Data of forest produce as per the archival records available from the 'Revenue and Forest Department 1821-1887' of the Bombay presidency need to be studied to estimate the toll taken over this timber exploitation for the purpose of railway expansion.

Apart from Railway expansion the urbanization of Bombay from mere seven islands into a modern financial and commercial centre also took a toll on the forests of Western Ghats. These aspects of resource exploitation have also not been adequately studied. The use of Teak, Sal, Deodhar and other high quality timber for Construction, Furnishing and other uses has to be studied as the expansion of demography took place in the city. Whether it was the immigration to Bombay city or the growth of indigenous population, both groups used wood extensively for construction and habitation activity.

Added to the burden of expanding railway infrastructure, commercial export of timber and the urbanization of Bombay, events like the World Wars were periods of unprecedented exploitation of Forestry especially during the Second World War. Almost all sections of the Forest Research Institute were dedicated solely for the War requirements. Exports of timber for war efforts led to huge impact on forest cover.

Although India became independent on 15th August 1947, it still continued administering region of western India via the Bombay presidency until the bifurcation of Bombay presidency into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat on 1st May 1960. During the period from 1947 to 1960, the forests were still administered under Bombay Presidency. Elements of continuity and change in the administration of forests are worth studying.

The colonial government although largely was indulging in deforestation and exploitation of the forest timber resources, they were compelled to undertake efforts in the name of forest conservation. Termed as, 'Scientific Afforestation' or 'Silviculture' efforts, it implied the plantation of trees that were commercially valuable in place of naturally grown forests. Such efforts were

undertaken with the aim of careful plantation of the timber trees for further felling and use for commercial purpose.

The Annales school of Historiography was established by Lucien Febvre (1878-1956) and Marc Bloch (1886-1944). The roots of this school were in the French journal '*Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations'.* The studies were based on writing history of the regions beyond Paris which for centuries had been the centre of History writing. Under Fernand Braudel's direction the Annales school promoted a new form of history, replacing the study of leaders with the lives of ordinary people and replacing examination of politics, diplomacy, and wars with inquiries into climate, demography, agriculture, commerce, technology, transportation, and communication, as well as social groups and mentalities. While aiming at a "total history," it also yielded dazzling micro studies of villages and regions. Its international influence on historiography has been enormous. It is under this theoretical framework that the study of 'History of Forestry' will take place. It will try to emphasize on the Commercial exploitation of forests and the impact it had on them with the background of colonial policies

Significance of the Study

It is a fact that Environmental problems of the present and future will require wide understanding and cooperation between all human communities and governments. It will need a lot of rectification in the areas of government policy making, human behavior modification and resources intensive economic activities. In order to move in the right direction, we need to know where we went wrong. The actions which have proven beneficial and those which have proven harmful for the natural habitats like forests, mountain ranges, rivers and oceans need to be studied in an unbiased manner. After thorough study it will be these natural habitats that will have to be considered the most important stakeholders in future policy making. Once it is realized that what would be in the interest of these natural habitats only those human activities which align with the interests of nature will have to be continued and newer climate positive or at least climate neutral activities will have to be carried out.

The study will try to bring out these very aspects of knowledge. The rampant modernization of the past two centuries have definitely enhanced the standard of living of mankind and has brought us all the gifts of modernity and unprecedented sense of security and comfort, yet it has been at the cost of tremendous harm to natural habitats and other living species. The study will try to look on

all aspects of forestry including government policies, civilization defining events like the World Wars and their impact on forests, the impact of Urbanization of Bombay and the toll it took on forest produces.

Objectives

The research aims at exploring and detailing the history of forestry comprehensively. It will study about various aspects of Forestry in the state of Maharashtra and Gujarat from 1878 to 1960. The following are the objectives of the study –

- To study the Forest Policies and Acts initiated by the colonial and post colonial government. It was these policies that formed the basis for forest resource exploitation.
- To study the impact of urbanization of Bombay and Railway expansion on forestry of the western India. These infrastructural needs present the bulk of the demand for timber. It is necessary to have a complete overlook of these causes of forest exploitation.
- To critically analyze the Afforestation efforts undertaken by the Colonial and post colonial Governments. The efforts of Silviculture and plantations were taken with the aim to resolve future demands for timber and thus provide an uninterrupted supply of Timber.
- To present quantitative and qualitative analysis of the resource exploitation of the minor forest produces leading to commercialization of these products.
- To find elements of continuity and change in the Colonial and Post colonial rule. The time period between 1947-1960 forms the foundational period for independent India, it would be essential to find which policies were continued and which were discontinued after the Transfer of Power from the hands of Britishers into the hands of Indians.
- Try to find linkages between local forest produces and Global events like World Wars. World Wars present the best example of colonial mentality of Maximum extraction of colonial wealth for fulfilling the interests of Imperial powers.

Research Problem and Tentative Hypothesis

The research will address to the problems of Deforestation, Forest Resources exploitation and colonial and post-colonial Land-use policies among other environmental challenges. A complete study of various aspects of Forestry will be attempted by the study. Forest Governance Policies,

Colonial Exploitation of Forest Resources, Floral composition of the Forestry, Role of Tribals and other Forest dependent Communities, Role of Forests in supplying raw materials (Timber, Minor Forest Produces etc.) in fulfilling Urbanization goals are all intermingling issues that require detailed study for understanding Forestry of the above time period. We all have tremendously benefitted from the process of modernization but we still have not completely understood the cost that was paid by the nature. And it is this lack of understanding that is the root cause of the indifference often found regarding environmental issues amongst us. The study will try to build a comprehensive picture about the region and the history of forestry. Colonial exploitation of the First half of the Twentieth Century is yet to be studied and the facts are yet to be unearthed. Also, the aspects of change and continuity in forest policies after the Transfer of Power in 1947 need to be studied. It was in the period of study that steps towards proper conservation took place in the form of establishment of Hailey (now Jim Corbett) National Park in 1936. Today National Park system is the primary way of Forest conservation. This can also be said as a gradual realization and small but the first step in the movement from exploitation to conservation.

Tentative Hypothesis statement

The Colonial and Post-Colonial government policies and subsequent activities like the Urbanization of Bombay, especially the expansion of Railways, and the World Wars caused rampant exploitation of forest resources of Western region of India leading to Deforestation and Afforestation.

Operational Definitions

- **Forestry:** Forestry is the science and craft of creating, managing, planting, using, conserving and preserving forests, woodlands and associated resources for human and environmental benefits. Forestry is practiced in plantations and natural stands. The science of forestry has elements that belong to the biological, physical, social, political and managerial sciences.
- **Silviculture:** It is the practice of controlling the growth, composition/structure, and quality of forests to meet values and needs, specifically timber production. Silviculture also focuses on making sure that the treatment of forest strands are used to conserve and improve their productivity.
- **Shifting cultivation:** Shifting cultivation is an agricultural system in which a person uses a

piece of land, only to abandon or alter the initial use a short time later. This system often involves clearing of a piece of land followed by several years of wood harvesting or farming until the soil loses fertility. Once the land becomes inadequate for crop production, it is left to be reclaimed by natural vegetation, or sometimes converted to a different long term cyclical farming practice.

- **Deforestation**: It is the clearing or thinning of forests by humans. Deforestation represents one of the largest issues in global land use. Estimates of deforestation traditionally are based on the area of forest cleared for human use, including removal of the trees for wood products and for croplands and grazing lands.

Methodology

The study will be based largely on Primary Archival Sources. Institutions like the Government of Maharashtra Archives, Baroda State Archives are rich repository for the records of the period of study. Primary Sources will include the colonial and post colonial policy documents, Statistical reports, and statutory Committee studies appointed by the Government. It will make a thorough and extensively analysis of Government Forestry records and reports to unearth and present a clear and comprehensive picture of Forestry in western India. It will also study contemporary newspapers, journals, memoirs and travelogues of colonial officials and other travelers, explorers or firsthand reports of the ground reality of forestry. The study will also include analysis of the published and unpublished Archival records from various colonial departments like Gardens and Parks Department, Revenue and Forest Departments that will help in analyzing the implementation of Forest policies. The research will also try to dwell into the findings of 'Forest Administration Report of the Province of Bombay, 1941-1942' and 'One Hundred Years of Indian Forestry: 1861-1961' among others which will provide the ground level report of the impact of forest policies and resources exploitation. Reports and Studies of reputed institutions like the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) will be studied with historical perspective to understand the impact of Forest policies with field studies. It will also study the huge contribution of secondary sources in the form of Books, Articles written by scholars and historians in the field of environmental history.

The theoretical basis for the research has been based on the Annales School of Historiography and the inspiration and research methodology has been derived from the pioneering works of

Ramchandra Guha, Richard Tucker, Mahesh Rangarajan and Neena Rao among others. Recent works of Dr. Louiza Rodrigues have also thrown guiding light which will help the researcher to pursue the subject.

Scheme of Chapterization

The proposed research shall be divided in the following scheme of Chapterisation –

Introduction

The introduction to the thesis attempts to justify the area of research, the title, time frame, scope and rationale of the study undertaken. It states the details of the existing literature on the said area and the lacuna within it which has promoted this study. It will draw upon the works of scholars like Neena Rao and Dr. Louiza Rodrigues and try to provide a connection with their studies. It will also explore the theoretical framework of the Annales School by focusing on the history of Forestry and the impact it had on the forests.

The introduction chapter would include the Temporal and Spatial background for the study. Historically, after the defeat of Marathas in the Third Anglo Maratha War in 1818 the administration of the regions of Western India fell into the hands of the East India Company which governed it under the Bombay Presidency up to 1858 when the British Crown took over the administration of the Indian Subcontinent. This area provided the raw materials for the rapid urbanization of Bombay and for the expansion of railway lines in the western region. Timber trees of Thana and Kolaba districts like Teak, Babul, Blackwood, Khair, Ain, Sal, Deodhar were used for railway sleepers and fuels providing the needs of both Public and private infrastructure and commercial and ship building needs. The chapter will provide the connection with forest resource exploitation prior to the year 1878 to provide continuity with existing studies.

It will also include the introduction to 'The Government Forests Act of 1865', the first nationwide regulation of Indian forests, which had become controversial and were subsequently replaced by the Indian Forests Act of 1878. It is with this act that a system for classifying forest access and use was undertaken. It is with this Act of 1878 that we find an unregulated exploitation of forest resources being systematized. It is therefore the right beginning to assess the impact of Colonial forest policy on the forests of Western India.

Chapter 1. Colonial Ecological Intervention: Policies and Acts

This chapter attempts to understand the timeline of Colonial Policies as it created the background for commercial exploitation of the forestry. It begins with the background of failure of the Government Forests Act of 1865 upon which the 'Indian Forest Act 1878' was enacted to correct its shortcomings. The study will do a detailed analysis of the Indian Forest Act, 1878. Its categorization of forests types and the impact it had on the forest resource use will be highlighted. The research will then move forward to study the 'Indian Forest Policy Resolution in 1894' which paid greater attention to the local demands of forest lands. It definitely had more impact over the rural and tribal communities that were directly depended on the Forests. This aspect would also be studied in the above chapter. The study will then advance with the 'Indian Forest Act 1927' where rights and duties of forest officials were clarified and expanded the Government control over Indian Forests. Further the 'Government of India Act 1935' which was a significant milestone in Indian administration will be studied as the division of subjects into Federal and Provincial subjects was undertaken. The importance of Forests as a subject is evident from the fact that forests were included in the provincial list (item 22). This aspect of dual administration had resulted in greater complexity in forest administration. This aspect will be studied under this chapter.

Chapter 2. Expansion of the Railways, Urbanization of Bombay and their Impact on the Forests of Western India

The use of Timber from Western Ghats for lying of Railway sleepers began with the very first railway line that ran from Bori Bundar in Bombay to Thane on 16th April 1853. Subsequent expansion of Railways led to exponential increase in demand of timber which was supplied through the forests of Western Ghats, This chapter will try to present a detailed picture of use of timber for this very specific purpose. It will try to analyze unpublished archival sources of 'Revenue and Forest Department' from the Maharashtra State Archives. The chapter will try to provide a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data based analysis of the extent of deforestation for the purpose of Railway expansion.

Apart from Railway expansion, Urbanizaiton of Bombay was also the reason for massive deforestation. Bombay has turned out to be among the center of economic activity for India from the colonial times. It has grown in exponential terms in the past 200 years. This urbanization of the city has been fuelled by a brilliant combination of Human, Natural and Financial Resources. However, the toll it has taken on the rampant exploitation of forest resources has not been

adequately studied. The use of Teak, Sal, Deodhar and other high quality timber for Construction, Furnishing and other uses has to be studied as the expansion of demography took place in the city. Whether it was the immigration to Bombay or the growth of indigenous population both groups used wood for construction and habitation activity. This chapter will study this aspect via Government records of trading of timber for construction and habitation purposes. It will try to estimate the economic value of the timber trade in the urbanization of Bombay.

Chapter 3. Commercialization of Forests: Trading Minor Forest Produce

Along with timber there were other resources too that were extracted from the forests of Western Ghats. Among them were Lacs, Honey, Medicinal Herbs, berries, fuel wood and fodders. This extraction of forest resources for human consumption and utility has been carried out since olden times. In fact, the extraction of these resources from forest by various tribal communities and their deliverance to local rural and minor towns for their integration into the economy was among the chief reasons of interaction and socialization of the tribal communities with rural population. The regions of Western Ghats were rich in their production of such minor forest resources and the tribal and semi-tribal communities especially, in the forest regions of modern Palghar, Thane and Raigad district were readily engaging with the trade of such produce. The chapter will try to tap the recorded archival sources regarding these transactions. The complete scope and economic value of such trade has not been clearly mapped out and the study will do its humble attempt to study it. It will also help to understand the impact it had on the indigenous tribal communities and their interaction with the rural population. It will also try to look into this particular aspect of economic discontent which were among the primary reason for tribal uprisings in these region

Chapter 4. Impact of World Wars (I and II) on Timber Trade and Deforestation

This chapter will try to link the globalized events of World War I and II with the impact it had on the forests of Western Ghats. During this time period the forests were exploited on an unprecedented scale. Timber demand was fulfilled not just from the deciduous forests of Western Ghats, but even from evergreen forest regions of the Western Ghats. Previously unhindered forests tracts were visited and innumerous trees were cut down to supply for the overseas war efforts. This chapter would try to analyze the extent of this Deforestation and come up with quantitative estimate of this trade.

Chapter 5. Afforestation in Western India

The colonial government although largely were indulging in deforestation and exploitation of the forest timber resources, they were compelled to undertake efforts towards forest conservation. Termed as, 'Scientific Afforestation', the term implied the plantation of trees that were commercially valuable in place of naturally grown forests. Such efforts were undertaken with the aim of careful plantation of the timber trees for further felling and use for commercial purpose. This chapter will critically evaluate the efforts undertaken under this policy and the impact it had on the forest landscape.

Chapter 6. Colonial and Post-Colonial Forestry: Continuity and Change (1947–1960)?

Although India became independent on 15th August 1947 it still continued administering region of western India via the Bombay presidency until the bifurcation of Bombay presidency into the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat on 1st May 1960. The research hence would study the period from 1947 to 1960 as the forests were still administered under Bombay Presidency. This chapter would try to find elements of continuity and change in the administration of forests during this time period. It would be interesting to study what changes were undertaken once the forest resources were under the governance of Indian officials and what impact the early Five Year Plans had on the extraction of forest resources.

Conclusion – The concluding chapter attempts to understand and summarize the findings of all the chapters and create a comprehensive picture of all the aspects of forestry of Western India, primarily Maharashtra and Gujarat. It will try to analyze the huge toll that forests had to pay in the process of urbanization, modernization of India through the period from 1878 to 1960.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of the study is limited both spatially and temporally. The area of research is limited to the forests of Maharashtra and Gujarat in Western India in the colonial and post-colonial period during the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of twentieth century upto 1960. The western India, embraces within its limits the western half of the Deccan tableland, the Western Ghats, the Konkan, North Kanara, parts of the Satpura hills within Khandesh connecting the neighboring valley of the Tapti, Kathiawar and Gujarat and the western extremity of the Vindhya chain where it slopes downward into the Rewa Kantha country. However, the study will only cover the forest

areas of Maharashtra and Gujarat as they were under the general administration of Bombay Presidency. The period of study is from 1878, when state monopoly over forests was established in the legal sense, and the system of reserved and protected forests was introduced, and restrictions on local use of forests like fodder, wood, and game, and also wild animal products like hides, tusks, horns, and meat was imposed. The period of study ends in 1960, with the establishment of Separate states of Gujarat and Maharashtra after which the policy matters were largely separated under their state level jurisdiction.

Results and Implications of the Study

In contemporary times, this study is relevant as newer concepts like sustainable economic practices, land use policies, reduction in carbon emissions and elimination of Green House Gases are been seen as steps towards reducing the Global Average Temperature rise below 2-Degree Celsius. Forests are been seen as among the most important natural habitats which will help restore some kind of balance between man and nature. The study will certainly aid in future policy making which would be nature and community centric rather than merely the monetization of Forest resources. Democratization in forest managements, greater concern about the rights of the tribal, rural population and the marginalized communities and greater cooperation between the state apparatus and the community are seen as the path to future forest sustainability. The new interdisciplinary study of Environmental History has surely helped in boosting the journey towards a movement for reduction in Green House Gas emissions and silencing climate change skeptics by providing hard evidences of climate change in the past two centuries owing to anthropogenic activities. It has been realized that there is an urgent need to grow awareness and not just in the common public but also in the minds and hearts of policy makers. The study will definitely try to note down the policy shortcomings and present an unbiased analysis of the forest resource exploitation of the Western India. The study, humbly requests to contribute its bit towards enhancing our knowledge and achieving human-nature balance

Literature Review

Environmental History is relatively an emerging area in the field of research in history. Hence, there are very few major works in this field. A brief review of the literature on environmental history of the 19th and 20th century of India suggests that, although there is a large number of

works on the topics like environmental struggles, exploitation of forest resources there are comparatively less studies in the field of understanding changes and continuities at regional level. The systematic extermination and conservation of forestry in the period 1878to 1960 has not been fully explored from the historical point of view in the regions of Maharashtra and Gujarat. This research fills this lacuna and explores this exciting area. The following literature will serve as the guiding path light for which this student is grateful to them.

- ***"The Fissured Land -An Ecological History of India (1992)"*** is a remarkable work on environmental history by Madhav Gadgil and Ramchandra Guha which examines the ecological impact of colonial rule in India, it also gives an interesting perspective about the resistance of the masses to British forest policies. It also speaks about the theoretical aspects of Conservation and Community.
- ***"Development and Deforestation: The making of Urban Bombay c. 1800-1880 (2019)"*** by Dr. Louiza Rodrigues will serve as a major landmark in the study as it speaks about the link between Deforestation and its causes like Railway expansion, ship building of the early 19th Century and Urbanization needs which were fulfilled by the Forests of Western India. It also covers the aspects of conservation and afforestation efforts undertaken during the colonial period. It is a monumental work and lays the footprints to be followed for the study.
- ***"Environmentalism: A Global History (2014)"*** by Ramchandra Guha details the major trends, ideas within the Environmental Movement worldwide. It provides a global framework for understanding Environmentalism and provides a global background to study changes in India. It also helps in comparative analysis of global linkages in events like World Wars.
- ***"India's Environmental History –Colonialism , modernity and the nation', Volume II,(2011)"*** edited by Mahesh Rangarajan and K Shivaramakrishnan , gives us a vivid picture of the colonial policy especially related to the faunal composition, hunting and other aspects of Forestry.
- ***"Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India (1995)"*** by Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, explore our society that is in ecological terms one of the most complex in the world. It also presents an original theoretical framework which innovatively combines political economy and ecology.
- ***"Man and Environment -The Ecological history of India, (2010)"*** by Irfan Habib traces

the ecological history of India from past to present and contends that despite the existence of hunting in ancient and medieval times, it was during colonial times that maximum damage to forestry and wildlife was caused. However, this book has made a general study of the ecological history of India without highlighting any particular region which the current work will highlight.

- ***"A Forest History of India (2012)"*** by Richard P. Tucker, evaluates the British forest policy in detail, and in chapter IX of this book briefly discusses the history of the wildlife conservation movement in general in the colonial and post-colonial period, with a cursory reference to the conservation movement in the western region
- ***"Ecology, Climate, and Empire : Colonialism and Global Environmental History, 1400-1940 (1997)"*** by Richard Grove, is a collection of essays in the field of environmental history demonstrating that concerns about climate change are far from being a uniquely modern phenomenon. The pioneering historian has traced the origins of present-day environmental debates about soil erosion, deforestation and climate change in the writings of early colonial administrators, doctors and missionaries.
- ***"Nature and the Orient: The Environmental History of South and Southeast Asia (1998)"*** Edited by Richard Grove, Vinita Damodaran and Satpal Sangwan is a major contribution to the emergence of environmental history relating to South and Southeast Asia. It provides diverse accounts of major historical themes relating to the environment of this region. As the major focus of the book is the 'History of Forest Management', particularly in India during British colonial rule it provides the footprints to be followed for this study.
- ***"Environmental Issues in India: A Reader (2006)"*** Edited by Mahesh Rangarajan is a collection of 33 essays by seminal environment scholars, thinkers and activists. It explores the environmental history throughout the pre-colonial, colonial and independent India period. Issues of Environmental movements and their connections to global environmental concerns have also been highlighted in this invaluable research material.
- ***"Fencing the Forest: Conservation and Ecological Change in India's Central Provinces, 1860-1914 (Studies in Social Ecology & Environmental History)(1996)"*** by Mahesh Rangarajan draws on archival and printed sources to shed fresh light on the ecological dimensions of the colonial impact on South Asia. The changing responses of rural forest users and the fortunes of the land they lived on are the primary themes of the book. The study period largely collaborates with the time period of this study.

The above literatures in the field of Environmental History are landmark researches in their own aspects. They have certainly brought the subject of Environmental History from a fringe movement in history writing to the mainstream of History writing in the 21st Century. This is exactly what is aimed in the Annales School of History, to bring the unknown, neglected subjects of the periphery into mainstream history which becomes the history of the masses as apart from traditionally political centered. The research will focus on the Western Ghats which after the Himalayas is the second largest mountain range in India and is among the most bio-diverse hotspot in the world. The importance of this region is evident from the 'Report of the Western Ghats Ecology Ecology Expert Panel (2011)' under the renowned Prof. Madhav Gadgil. The resource exploitation in this region has vast implication not just on the endemic floral and faunal composition of the region but also on the climatic conditions of this region. The study will try to fill in the gaps in the knowledge about the environmental aspect of this region from the historical perspective. It will help in ensuring better policy making for this region.

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